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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN: NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORT STOPPAGE REFLECTS  
CONTINUED POLITICAL/MILITARY TENSION

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1723

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1709

[1](#)1. (U) The Governors of White Nile State (in Sudan's "North") and Upper Nile State (part of South Sudan) were to confer November 7 on reopening North-South river and road traffic along the Nile. National Congress Party (NCP) White Nile Governor Mohamed Nurallah had halted North-South transport on November 1, alleging increased tension along the 1-1-56 boundary between Northern and Southern Sudan, due to an increased presence of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). The local Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) commander charged harassment of river traffic by the SPLA, claims that the SPLA has denied.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The closure follows an October 24 SAF-SPLA confrontation in the nearby town of Kwek, the specifics of which remain murky. On November 1, senior SPLA leaders told Special Envoy Natsios that the SAF advanced aggressively on an SPLA unit on the Southern side of the border (reftel). Governor Nurallah, however, claimed that it was the SPLA that entered the town.

[1](#)3. (U) The blockade reportedly has stopped food and other consumer goods from reaching the Upper Nile town of El-Renk, resulting in shortages and rising prices. The Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) has denounced the closures as a violation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. SPLM officials have charged that the stoppage was masterminded by the NCP leadership in Khartoum, rather than by local officials in White Nile, as a means of demonstrating their ability to inflict pain on the South.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Comment: The closure is another in a series of incidents along the 1-1-56 border, following the withdrawal by the SPLM of cabinet level participation in the Government of National Unity. Although the SPLM and the NCP have reached a potential agreement on a mechanism to resolve their dispute, tensions between the two sides remain high. Deep suspicions remain on both sides, especially security forces, and these have not been eased by a poorly understood and yet to be implemented arrangement agreed to by five men in Khartoum on November 2 (reftel b). SPLM charges that the blockade is a thinly disguised attempt by Khartoum to bully the South may be true, or they may reflect the pervasive suspicion in the South of the NCP and the Khartoum government. One of the ironies of the situation is that, as per the CPA, the Governors of both states involved in this issue belong to the NCP as that agreement designates the governorship of one state in the North and one in the South for the other party (the SPLM holds the governorship in the Northern state of Blue Nile). End comment.

FERNANDEZ